

tions were made final last summer at various international meetings.

A joint international effort to collect geophysical information about the earth was made in 1882-83. It was known as the First International Polar Year and, during it, the first Arctic auroral, meteorological and magnetic observation stations were set up.

Seen in Narrow Zone

From data collected, the aurora was removed from the realm of folklore and fancy, and recognized as a beautiful display of nature tied in somehow with the earth's magnetic field. The scientists learned that the "northern lights" are regularly seen only within a narrow band known as the auroral zone.

This band is now the area where the U. S. must have its first line of defense. Since the aurora forms an electrical mirror in the sky, it could affect the sensitive electronic instruments that are so vital to our defense.

The Second International Polar Year, 1932-33, followed the first by 50 years. Studies of the earth's ionosphere during this special period, and following it, by English and American scientists led to the discovery of radar. Radar not only was a powerful weapon in helping the Allies to win World War II, but it will be used in the coming IGY to learn more about our atmosphere.

The 1957 effort far surpasses in scope either of the two previous efforts. It was first suggested by Dr. Berkner. The amount of information scientists will gather will be several times that of either of the two previous international years.

Rockets, radiosonde equipment, ionospheric recorders, auroral spectrometers and electronic computers are all devices, just recently available, that will be used to learn more about the earth, its seas and air during 1957-58.

Science News Letter, January 15, 1955

ZOOLOGY

Gophers' Homemaking May Be Control Answer

► THE HOMEMAKING practices of the pocket gopher may provide the answer to its control, Dr. Walter E. Howard of the University of California reported at the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Berkeley, Calif.

A seven-year study of more than 1,000 pocket gophers, California's most serious field rodent pest, made at the San Joaquin Experimental Range, O'Neals, Calif., showed that neighboring and young gophers quickly rec occupy burrows abandoned by other gophers that have been killed or trapped.

This behavior, Dr. Howard stated, may make it possible to develop improved methods of control, in which an entire population is held in check by placing a new kind of bait in only a small proportion of the burrow systems.

Science News Letter, January 15, 1955

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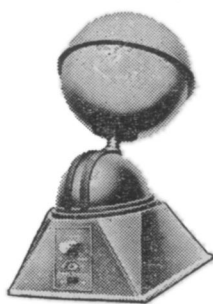
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